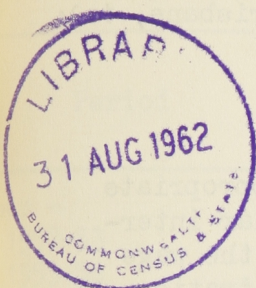


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RETAIL PRICES - MARCH QUARTER, 1961

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

For current statistical purposes the Consumer Price Index replaces both the "C" Series Retail Price Index first compiled in 1921 and the Interim Retail Price Index constructed as a transitional index in 1954. Publication of the Interim Index ceased after March quarter, 1960, while the "C" Series Index was last published for December quarter, 1960.

The Consumer Price Index was first published in August, 1960, though it has been calculated back to September quarter, 1948. It has been compiled only for the six State capital cities. Consequently, this bulletin deals mainly with variations in retail prices in Brisbane.

The Consumer Price Index measures quarterly for each capital city separately the variations in prices of commodities and services as affecting a high proportion of the expenditure of wage-earner households. Commodities and services included in the index are food, clothing, drapery, home ownership, rent of privately owned and government owned houses, fuel, light, household appliances and supplies, fares, motoring, tobacco, cigarettes, beer, cinema, radio and television licenses, newspapers, postal and telephone services, hairdressing, dry cleaning, and various other items. The index has been constructed with the year 1952-53 as base for each capital city individually and does not provide a comparison of the retail price level in any other city.

The various commodities and services have been combined into groups, and group indexes are available for Food, Clothing and Drapery, Housing, Household Supplies and Equipment, and Miscellaneous.

A full description of the Consumer Price Index is contained in a bulletin (S.B.891) issued in January, 1961, by the Commonwealth Statistician.

During the March quarter of 1961, the All Groups Brisbane Consumer Price Index rose to 126.7 from 125.1 in the last quarter of 1960, an increase of 1.3 per cent., while over the year ended March, 1961, the index increased by 4.2 per cent.

The rise in the All Groups index was mainly due to an increase in the Food Group where the index number rose by 3.1 per cent. from 130.0 in December quarter, 1960, to 134.0 in March quarter, 1961. A substantial seasonal increase in potato prices, combined with higher egg prices, were the principal causes of the rise in the Food Group index. However, these increases were partly offset by lower meat prices, for although meat prices were at a record high level in January, sharp decreases in the last two months of the quarter resulted in an overall decrease in the quarterly average.

The Clothing and Drapery Group showed little change from the previous quarter, the index number rising by 0.3 per cent. from 115.0 to 115.3.

Small increases in housing prices, repairs, and rentals combined to cause a rise in the Housing Group index from 137.0 to 138.4, an increase of 1.0 per cent.

In the Household Supplies and Equipment Group there was an increase of 0.7 per cent., the index number rising from 110.7 in December quarter, 1960, to 111.5 in March quarter, 1961.

The Miscellaneous Group recorded the smallest increase of all the groups, the index number increasing from 129.5 to 129.7 during the quarter, a rise of 0.2 per cent.

All capital cities showed an upward movement in retail prices during the quarter, the increase being greatest in Brisbane and smallest in Melbourne. Percentage increases from the December quarter, 1960, were as follows:- Brisbane, 1.3; Perth and Hobart, 0.9; Adelaide, 0.8; Sydney, 0.7; and Melbourne, 0.5.

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE BASIC WAGE RATES

Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are reviewed by the appropriate Industrial Authorities from time to time - in some cases at fairly regular intervals and in others as a result of special applications for variation of the wage rate. The last variation made by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was an addition of 15s. to the male basic wage with corresponding adjustments to the female and juvenile rates and operated from 11th June, 1959. In a judgment delivered on 12th April, 1960, the Commission rejected an application for a further increase in the Commonwealth basic wage.

The Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1961 abolished automatic quarterly reviews of the basic wage, but the Industrial Commission was empowered to vary the wage after a general hearing as a result of applications by interested parties. Following applications received and a general hearing, the Commission delivered judgment on 24th May, 1961, increasing the male rate by 4s. and the female rate by 3s., operative from 29th May, 1961.

Current Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are shown in the following table.

Basic Wage Rates - Australian Capital Cities

Capital City	Commonwealth Basic Wage			State Basic Wage		
	Males	Females	Date of Operation	Males	Females	Date of Operation
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Brisbane ..	12 18 0	9 13 6	11.6.59a	14 4 0	10 13 0b	29.5.61
Sydney ..	14 3 0	10 12 0	11.6.59a	14 19 0	11 4 0	1.5.61a
Melbourne ..	13 15 0	10 6 0	11.6.59a	13 15 0	10 6 0	22.6.59
Adelaide ..	13 11 0	10 3 0	11.6.59a	13 11 0	10 3 0	15.6.59a
Perth ..	13 16 0	10 7 0	11.6.59a	14 19 3	11 4 5	1.5.61
Hobart ..	14 2 0	10 11 6	11.6.59a	14 2 0	10 11 6	1.7.59a

a These rates operate from the first pay period commencing on or after the date shown.

b The female rate in Brisbane was increased by a judgment of the Court by 16s. to £10 10s. from 1st May, 1961, and is now 75 per cent. of the male wage.

S. E. SOLOMON

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42 George Street,
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30th May, 1961

Consumer Price Index - Total and Group Indexes - Brisbane
(Year 1952-53 = 100)

Period		Food	Clothing and Drapery	Housing	Household Supplies and Equipment	Miscellaneous	All Groups
Year -							
1952-53	..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953-54	..	103.4	100.9	101.6	101.7	101.7	102.0
1954-55	..	104.1	101.3	104.7	102.5	102.0	102.9
1955-56	..	107.7	102.2	110.5	102.6	108.0	106.3
1956-57	..	111.5	104.7	118.4	106.5	118.9	112.0
1957-58	..	113.0	107.8	123.9	108.3	120.5	114.4
1958-59	..	119.8	109.4	128.4	109.0	123.6	118.2
1959-60	..	124.2	111.9	132.6	110.6	125.6	121.2
Quarter -							
1960 - March	..	124.6	112.2	132.7	111.0	125.9	121.6
June	..	125.3	113.9	134.0	110.9	126.2	122.3
September		126.9	114.1	136.1	110.6	128.3	123.6
December		130.0	115.0	137.0	110.7	129.5	125.1
1961 - March	..	134.0	115.3	138.4	111.5	129.7	126.7

Percentage Increase or Decrease (-) on Previous Quarter

Quarter -							
1960 - March	..	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.7
June	..	0.6	1.5	1.0	-0.1	0.2	0.6
September		1.3	0.2	1.6	-0.3	1.7	1.1
December		2.4	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.9	1.2
1961 - March	..	3.1	0.3	1.0	0.7	0.2	1.3

Consumer Price Index - Capital Cities
(Year 1952-53 = 100 for Each City and for Six Capitals)

Period		Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average - Six Capitals
Year -								
1952-53	..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953-54	..	101.6	102.0	102.0	102.3	103.0	105.0	102.0
1954-55	..	102.3	102.0	102.9	103.5	105.2	104.9	102.6
1955-56	..	105.7	108.1	106.3	106.9	107.9	110.2	106.9
1956-57	..	112.9	114.0	112.0	111.1	112.9	116.9	113.1
1957-58	..	114.5	114.4	114.4	111.9	113.6	117.0	114.2
1958-59	..	115.3	116.6	118.2	114.5	114.7	118.7	116.0
1959-60	..	117.8	120.0	121.2	118.0	116.9	120.8	118.9
Quarter -								
1960 - March	..	118.2	119.8	121.6	118.3	117.1	120.8	119.0
June	..	119.6	123.0	122.3	120.6	119.0	122.6	121.1
September		120.8	124.9	123.6	121.5	119.8	125.8	122.5
December		121.6	125.5	125.1	122.4	120.8	127.1	123.3
1961 - March	..	122.5	126.1	126.7	123.4	121.9	128.3	124.2